



HARRIET CLARK, right, and her granddaughter **Kristine Abshire**, look through their family scrapbook which is filled with stories, photos, drawings and poems. Mrs. Clark recently published a book titled "Grammar Remembers." The book is a nostalgic glimpse of family life on the prairies of Kansas and Colorado in the early 1900s. (Staff photo by Craig Clohessy)

Woman records early memories

Her stories will serve as legacy

By **CRAIG CLOHESSY**
Post-Record Reporter

How many times as a child did we sit with a grandparent listening intently to stories of old — stories of a time long before we were born?

As curious as we were, how many of those stories can we still remember? Listening to the pleas of her grandchildren, Camas resident Harriet Clark, 91, put those stories on paper in a book titled, "Grammar Remembers."

Mrs. Clark's book takes a nostalgic look back at her family and life on the prairies of Kansas and Colorado in the early 1900s. The stories are filled with details and memories of good times and the hardships endured. And, like most memories, even the hard-times blur into recollections that don't seem quite so bad.

The book was written entirely by Mrs. Clark but she had help from family members including that of her granddaughter Kristine Abshire who now lives in Alaska. Abshire, visiting her grandmother for a week to help her mail the completed book to family members, said that her grandmother hasn't had an easy life but has always had time for children.

"Her home has always been one filled with hope," Abshire said. "Just the fact that she wrote the book tells a little bit about her life — she has always been a children's person."

Like many grandparents Mrs. Clark would often exaggerate a bit on the stories she would tell her grandchildren. She said she didn't want the stories to be boring so the tales would grow in proportion and the children would listen with the curiosity of youth. This went on until her granddaughter Kathy, who was 12-years-old at the time, pleaded with her grandmother to tell them true stories of what it was like as a little girl on the prairies of Kansas.

"Kathy was always our realist, she would beg me to tell some true stories," Mrs. Clark said. "I thought I was fooling them but I never was."

Kathy and her husband encouraged their grandmother to put her experiences to paper by buying her a scrap book

that is now filled with stories, drawings, photos and poems collected over a lifetime.

With the support of her family she took many of those stories, and more still that remained in her head, and completed a book of true stories for her grandchildren to remember.

"We in the family would remind her of the stories she told, 'grandma remember this story or that story,'" Abshire said. "With a little help from my mom and myself in organizing it, she came up with the final copy."

The book, completed and printed shortly after Christmas, is dedicated to Kathy who died several years ago of cancer.

"Kathy, Dear, I cross my heart and hope to die if all the stories in this book are not only true but are real examples of life in my olden days. Yes, I remember them all," says the preface of "Grammar Remembers."

Currently Mrs. Clark is mailing her book to family and friends as a belated Christmas gift and, if there are any left, she will probably sell copies to anyone who might be interested.

At the age of 91, Mrs. Clark has slowed down a little but her creative urges are always present and she might write another book telling the story of her family in more recent times. But there is always time for that, she said.